

Using social media to share statistics on the prevalence of violence against women

Cook Islands Ending Violence Against Women

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Project Name: Strengthening capacity towards the elimination of violence against women

Project partner: Ministry of Internal Affairs – Gender and Development Division, Punanga Tauturu Inc., Cook Islands Police

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Constable Rakei supporting the 16 days of Activism social media campaign.
Photo: Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a time to galvanise action to end violence against women and girls around the world, including in Cook Islands.

Government and civil society in Cook Islands collaborated to organise a series of activities to mark the 16 Days of Activism in 2016. Funded under the Australian aid program's [Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development](#) initiative, the campaign was locally developed, led and implemented by the Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs, Punanga Tauturu Inc., Ministry of Police, and the National Council of Women.

Events commenced on 25 November with White Ribbon Day that promotes men and boys speaking out against all forms of violence against women. The Hon. Albert Nicholas, Minister of Internal Affairs, was one man speaking out strongly on the issue:

'It is too easy to ignore that violence against women exists in our homes and in our community and today is a day where we seek the support of our men and our boys on how to end violence against our women and our girls.'

Other events included cultural shows, a road truck rally around the island, a trade fair, a te-au-vaine ('my sisters') market, and a social media campaign to engage the community, in particular men, to end violence against women.

The messages for the media campaign were drawn from the Cook Islands 2014 Family Health and Safety Study. This study provides reliable data on the prevalence and frequency of different types of violence against women. The study found that 32 per cent of ever-partnered women in Cook Islands have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner; and around five per cent of women reported experiencing sexual violence before the age of 15 by a non-partner, most commonly a male family member, friend, or acquaintance.

'This is not okay' says Ms Rebecca Buchanan from counselling service Punanga Tauturu Inc.

Giving people knowledge about the prevalence of violence against women is a starting point for them to take action. Ms Buchanan acknowledged that the success of getting this message out was due to the joined-up efforts of many people.

'Without all your support the White Ribbon campaign on the elimination of male violence towards women would not have

been as eventful, as it was all about encouraging men to take ownership of this important issue and model good behaviour that can change attitudes.'

** This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2016 – 2017](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).*